

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-07 COME-00 /079 W

----- 120437

R 060857Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4249

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC

USUN NEW YORK 283

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0046

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, SN ID

SUBJECT: ASEAN; SINGAPORE/INDONESIAN RELATIONS

1.SUMMARY: THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF MFA, TAN BOON SENG, HAS ADVISED THE EMBASSY THAT THE GOS HAS RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED THAT THE ASEAN SUMMIT WILL NOT AGREE TO AN ASEAN FREE TRADE AREA. HOWEVER, IT IS HOPEFUL THAT ASEAN WILL EVENTUALLY ACCEPT IT AND THAT THE SUMMIT WILL ENDORSE A NUMBER OF JOINT ASEAN INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS AND AGREE TO LIBERALIZE TARRIFFS ON A SELECTED NUMBER OF PRODUCTS. PRIME MINISTER LEE WILL VISIT BANGKOK THIS MONTH FOR PRE-SUMMIT TALKS WITH KHUKRIT, AND PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS BEEN INVITED TO VISIT SINGAPORE, BUT THE GOS DOES NOT PLAN TO USE THESE MEETINGS TO MOBILIZE PRESSURE AGAINST INDONESIA. THE GOS IS AWARE THAT THE GOI IS MOST UNHAPPY OVER SINGAPORE'S ABSTENTION ON THE TIMORE VOTE AT THE UNGA, BUT TAN IS CONFIDENT SINGAPORE/INDONESIAN RELATIONS WILL WEATHER THIS STORM. THE GOS  
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DECIDED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL TO ABSTAIN ON THE TIMOR ISSUE

BECAUSE (A) IT BELIEVED IT MUST CONSISTENTLY OPPOSE ARMED INTERVENTION AS A MEANS OF RESOLVING DISPUTES OR PROBLEMS, (B) THE FORCIBLE OCCUPATION OF TIMOR COULD CREATE A SERIOUS PRECEDENT AFFECTING BRUNEI AND EVEN THE SECURITY OF SINGAPORE ITSELF AND (C) THE GOS FELT JAKARTA MUST UNDERSTAND THAT SINGAPORE'S SUPPORT SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT WHILE GOS ABSTENTION MAY HAVE SET BACK SINGAPORE/INDONESIAN RELATIONS OVER THE SHORT TERM, IT MAY HAVE A LONGER TERM SALUTARY EFFECT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH DCM ON JANUARY 5, DEPUTY SECRETARY, MFA, TAN BOON SENG MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON ASEAN DEVELOPMENTS AND SINGAPORE/INDONESIAN RELATIONS.

3. ASEAN GOS IS DISAPPOINTED THAT ITS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE AN ASEAN FREE TRADE AREA (AFTA) HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY INDONESIA AND WILL NOT BE ADOPTED AT BALI, BUT IT HAS NOT LOST ALL HOPE THAT ASEAN WILL EVENTUALLY COME TO ACCEPT IT. TAN SAID ALL THE OTHER MEMBERS OF ASEAN EXCEPT INDONESIA HAD ACCEPTED THE FREE TRADE AREA WITH VARYING DEGREES OF ENTHUSIASM AND THAT HE PERSONALLY KNEW SOME INDONESIAN OFFICIALS WHO ALSO FAVORED IT.

4. TAN PLANNED TO LEAVE THE NEXT DAY TO ATTEND THE THIRD ASEAN SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING IN MANILA. THIS MEETING WILL CONTINUE THE LENGTHY PROCESS OF PREPARING AGENDA AND "FINALIZING PAPERS" FOR THE ASEAN SUMMIT IN BALI. ACCORDING TO PRESENT PLANNING, THE FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL MEET IN BANGKOK ON FEBRUARY 9 AND THE SUMMIT WILL CONVENE IN BALI AT THE END OF THE THIRD WEEK IN FEBRUARY. THE GOS WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH AT THESE MEETINGS FOR MEASURES TO PROMOTE CLOSER ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS. TAN WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE SUMMIT WOULD ENDORSE A NUMBER OF JOINT ASEAN INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS AND AGREE TO SELECTIVE TARIFF LIBERALIZATION ON A NUMBER OF PRODUCTS -- A STEP WHICH ADMITTEDLY FALLS FAR SHORT OF AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO ESTABLISH A FREE TRADE AREA. TAN ALSO ASSUMED THAT THE SUMMIT WOULD ENDORSE THE TREATY OF AMITY, BUT STRONGLY DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD FORMALLY ADOPT OR ANNOUNCE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE MUCH DISCUSSED

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ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE WOULD PROBABLY MAKE SOME FAVORABLE REFERENCE TO THE ZONE.

5. PRIOR BILATERAL MEETINGS BETWEEN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

TAN CONFIRMED PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW WOULD VISIT BANGKOK IN JANUARY FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH KHUKRIT. HE SEEMED UNCERTAIN

WHAT THEY WOULD TALK ABOUT, BUT ASSUMED LEE WOULD USE THE  
OCCASION TO INFORM HIMSELF ON THE INTERNAL SECURITY  
SITUATION IN THAILAND AND TO GIVE KHUKRIT THE BENEFIT OF  
HIS VIEWS ON THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF CLOSER ECONOMIC  
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS. TAN STRESSED  
THAT PRELIMINARY BILATERAL MEETINGS OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT  
PRIOR TO THE SUMMIT HAD BEEN CONTEMPLATED BY THE  
ASEAN GOVERNMENTS FOR SOME TIME AND THAT THE GOS DID NOT  
PLAN TO USE THEM TO MOBILIZE PRESSURE AGAINST INDONESIA ON  
THE FRE TRADE ZONE OR OTHER MATTER. TAN ALSO CONFIRMED  
THAT THE GOS HAD INVITED PRESIDENT MARCOS TO VISIT SINGAPORE  
PRIOR TO THE SUMMIT MEETING, BUT THAT THIS VISIT HAD NOT  
YET BEEN FIRMLY SCHEDULED.

6. SINGAPORE/INDONESIAN RELATIONS THE GOS IS VERY AWARE  
THAT THE GOI IS MOST UNHAPPY OVER SINGAPORE'S ABSTENTION  
ON THE UNGA VOTE ON TIMOR . HOWEVER, TAN VOLUNTEERED THAT

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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----- 120588

R 060857Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4250

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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HE DID NOT THINK GOI'S INDIGNATION WAS AS SERIOUS AS

WHEN THE GOS EXECUTED THE TWO INDONESIAN MARINES IN 1968 WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN HOSTILE ACTIVITIES AGAINST SINGAPORE DURING CONFRONTATION. THE GOS HAD DEVOTED A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS TO IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA, AND HE WAS CONFIDENT SINGAPORE'S BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA WOULD WEATHER THIS LATEST STORM.

7. TAN SAID THE GOS DECISION TO ABSTAIN ON THE VOTE ON TIMOR HAD BEEN TAKEN AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL. IN EXPLAINING THIS DECISION TAN CITED A NUMBER OF FACTORS INCLUDING THE LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN INDONESIA'S UN DELEGATION AND JAKARTA AND THE CLEAVAGE BETWEEN THE INDONESIAN MILITARY AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE. HOWEVER, THERE WERE THREE BASIC REASONS WHY THE GOS HAD DECIDED TO ABSTAIN ON THIS IMPORTANT VOTE:

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A. FOR REASONS RELATED TO ITS OWN NATIONAL SECURITY, THE GOS WAS FUNDAMENTALLY OPPOSED TO ARMED INTERVENTION BY ANY COUNTRY TO SETTLE DISPUTES OR PROBLEMS IN A NEIGHBORING TERRITORY. THE GOS FELT IT MUST BE CONSISTENT IN SUPPORTING THIS PRINCIPLE, AND DID NOT BELIEVE IT COULD MAKE AN EXCEPTION EVEN WHEN IT INVOLVED ACTION BY A FRIENDLY ASEAN COLLEAGUE.

B. THE FORCIBLE TAKE-OVER OF TIMOR BY INDONESIAN FORCES WOULD PROVIDE A BAD PRECEDENT AND COULD CONCEIVABLY ENCOURAGE MALAYSIA IN A SIMILAR TAKE-OVER OF BRUNEI. IF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ACQUIESCED IN THE SWALLOWING UP OF BOTH TIMOR AND BRUNEI, IT COULD ENCOURAGE AT SOME FUTURE TIME POSSIBLY HOSTILE REGIMES TO TAKE AGGRESSIVE ACTION AGAINST SINGAPORE. TAN ADMITTED THAT SINGAPORE, AS A THRIVING INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC AND UN MEMBER OF TEN YEARS' STANDING, IS IN A CONSIDERABLY MORE SECURE POSITION THAN ODD COLONIAL REMNANTS LIKE BRUNEI OR TIMOR. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT IN GEOGRAPHICAL SIZE SINGAPORE WAS SMALLER THAN BOTH OF THEM.

C. FINALLY, THE GOS FELT THAT GOI MUST UNDERSTAND THAT SINGAPORE WAS NOT PREPARED TO GO ALONG AUTOMATICALLY ACCOMMODATING AND SUPPORTING EVERY TWIST AND SUDDEN TURN OF INDONESIAN DIPLOMACY. GOS SUPPORT SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED AND THE SOONER INDONESIA REALIZED THIS THE BETTER OFF INDONESIA/SINGAPORE RELATIONS AND ASEAN WOULD BE.

8. COMMENT: THROUGHOUT THE DISCUSSION TAN'S GENERAL ATTITUDE WAS THAT ASEAN HAD HAD ITS UPS AND DOWNS OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, BUT THAT THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT ASEAN IS CURRENTLY IN A DOWN PERIOD. TAN WAS CLEARLY IN A CHASTENED MOOD AND EXHIBITED NONE OF THE BRAVADO OF SEVERAL WEEKS AGO WHEN HE SAID THAT THE GOS MIGHT NOT ATTEND THE SUMMIT IF INDONESIA REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE FREE TRADE ZONE. INSTEAD, TAN INDICATED THAT THE GOS WAS PREPARED TO MAKE THE BEST OF THE SITUATION DESPITE ITS DISAPPOINTMENT OVER INDONESIA'S CONFIDENTIAL

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REJECTION OF THE PROPOSED ASEAN FREE TRADE AREA AND THE RECENT SETBACK IN INDONESIAN/SINGAPORE RELATIONS.

9. ALTHOUGH THE GOS ABSTENTION ON THE TIMOR VOTE MAY HAVE SET BACK BILATERAL RELATIONS OVER THE SHORT TERM, IT MAY HAVE A SALUTARY EFFECT OVER THE LONGER TERM. IT WOULD SEEM FROM HERE THAT UNLESS INDONESIA REVERTS TO THE UNFORTUNATE DIPLOMACY OF THE CONFRONTATION PERIOD (WHICH WE BELIEVE IS MOST UNLIKELY), THE GOI WILL COME TO RECOGNIZE THAT ITS LEADERSHIP IN THE REGION OVER THE LONG RUN WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED BY ITS ASEAN PARTNER IF IT IS SMOOTHLY CONDUCTED, PERSUASIVE AND TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THEIR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS AND CONCERNS. UNTIL THE LAST FEW MONTHS OF 1975, INDONESIAN LEADERSHIP OF ASEAN HAS BEEN GENERALLY WELL EXECUTED WITH A PERCEPTIVE RECOGNITION OF THE SENSITIVITIES OF THE OTHER MEMBERS. HOPEFULLY, ONCE THE TIMOR EPISODE IS CONCLUDED, THE GOI WILL RETURN TO THE SUCCESSFUL STYLE WHICH HAS WON IT SUPPORT FROM ITS ASEAN COLLEAGUES IN THE PAST, INCLUDING PAYING GREATER ATTENTION TO THEIR VIEWS. SINGAPORE MAY ALSO HAVE LEARNED A LESSON IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. ALTHOUGH IT IS QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE THAT IN THE AFTERMATH OF INDOCHINA, THE GOS WOULD LIKE ASEAN TO MOVE MORE QUICKLY TO ACHIEVE GREATER ECONOMIC COOPERATION, IT WILL OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO DROP ITS RATHER FEISTY INSISTENCE ON SWEEPING ACROSS THE BOARD MEASURES IN FAVOR OF A LOWER RATE ON PROGRESS IF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES ARE TO MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER. HOLDRIDGE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, FREE TRADE AREAS, SUMMIT MEETINGS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 06 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976SINGAP00046  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760003-0987  
**From:** SINGAPORE  
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**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <13 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ASEAN; SINGAPORE/INDONESIAN RELATIONS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, SN, ID, ASEAN  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006